

Message Text

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S E C R E T ROME 7017

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DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO REPEAT TO PARIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJ: AGENDA FOR PRESIDENT'S PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH GISCARD

REF: (A) STATE 97006 (REPEATING PARIS 12538) (B) ROME 6906

(C) ROME 6818 (D) ROME 6789

1. WE UNDERSTAND GISCARD'S CONCERN ABOUT THE POSSIBLE EFFECT ON FRENCH ELECTIONS OF THE 'SUCCESS' OF THE PCI IN ITALY. HOWEVER, HIS CONCERN MAY BE LEADING HIM TO OVERSIMPLIFY THE PROBLEM AND, PARTICULARLY, WHAT NON-COMMUNIST ITALIAN LEADERS CAN DO ABOUT IT.

2. IT IS TRUE THAT RECENTLY THE DC'S FORTUNES HAVE IMPROVED AND THAT THE PCI IS SUFFERING "FROM THE STRAINS OF ITS SOMEWHAT AMBIGUOUS POSITION". THESE CHANGES IN FORTUNE OF ITALY'S TWO LARGEST PARTIES ARE IN LARGE PART DUE TO THE CURRENT "SOMEWHAT AMBIGUOUS" STRUCTURE OF THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT, I.E., THE DC HAS BEEN ABLE TO TAKE CREDIT (VIS-A-VIS THE ITALIAN PUBLIC) FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S RELATIVELY EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE SINCE LAST SUMMER, WHILE THE STRAINS WITHIN THE PCI ARE THE PRODUCT OF THE INCOMPREHENSION OF ITS FAITHFUL FOR ITS POLICY OF SUPPORTING

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THE GOVERNMENT. THESE STRAINS (WHICH SHOULD NOT BE OVERESTIMATED) HAVE LED THE PCI, TOGETHER WITH THE SMALL LAY PARTIES (EACH FOR ITS OWN REASONS), TO INSIST ON A CHANGE IN THE GOVERNMENTAL ARRANGEMENTS.

3. THE DC IS ATTEMPTING (REF B) IN EFFECT TO MAINTAIN

THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS, WITH AS LITTLE CHANGE AS POSSIBLE, PRECISELY BECAUSE THOSE ARRANGEMENTS HAVE PRODUCED SOME FAVORABLE SHIFT IN THE FORTUNES OF THE TWO LARGEST PARTIES AND BECAUSE THERE IS NO READY ALTERNATIVE. THE MOST THE DC IS WILLING TO DO IS TO WORK OUT, WITH THE OTHER PARTIES, THE GOVERNMENT'S LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM ON A LIMITED NUMBER OF URGENT ISSUES (E.G., LAW AND ORDER), BUT WITHOUT BRINGING THE PCI INTO THE GOVERNMENT OR INTO THE LATTER AND WHETHER IT WILL ULTIMATELY ACCEPT THE DC'S PROPOSED FORMULA REMAINS TO BE SEEN. WHAT IS CLEAR AT THE MOMENT IS THAT THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY IN THE DC IS FIRMLY OPPOSED TO BRINGING THE PCI INTO THE GOVERNMENT OR THE VOTING MAJORITY. THE CURRENT MANDATE TO MORO IN HIS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE OTHER PARTIES IS EXTREMELY LIMITED AND ANY ARRANGEMENT WILL HAVE TO BE REVIEWED BY THE DIRECTORATE AND POSSIBLY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE PARTY.

4. THE CRUNCH IN THE ANALYSIS COMES WHEN ONE LOOKS AT THE ALTERNATIVES. THE DC DOES NOT HAVE A MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT AND, GIVEN THE IRRESPONSIBLE ATTITUDES OF THE SMALL LAY PARTIES, THERE APPEARS TO BE NO POSSIBILITY OF CREATING A NON-COMMUNIST MAJORITY IN THE NEAR-TERM FUTURE. THUS, THE ONLY ALTERNATIVES TO THE DC'S PRESENT TACTIC ARE (1) THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE (DC/PCI), (2) A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY (DC/PCI/PSI/PSDI/PRI/PLI), OR (3) EARLY ELECTIONS. WE SEE NO ADVANTAGE TO US (OR TO GISCARD)

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IN THE FIRST TWO. THE DC ALSO REJECTS THEM. THUS, THE REAL ALTERNATIVE IS THE THIRD AND MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT EARLY ELECTIONS WOULD NOT RESOLVE THE PRESENT PARLIAMENTARY STALEMENT, BUT WOULD LEAVE THINGS MORE OR LESS AS THEY ARE WITH THE SMALL LAY PARTIES PROBABLY SOMEWHAT WEAKER. IN THE BROADER SENSE, AN ELECTION WHICH RESOLVES NOTHING DIMINISHES THE STATURE OF THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM ITSELF. SINCE EVOLUTION OF THE PRESENT ATTITUDES OF THE SMALL LAY PARTIES IS THE ONLY LONG-TERM HOPE FOR A NON-COMMUNIST MAJORITY, ANY STEPS WHICH WEAKEN THESE PARTIES WOULD NOT BE IN OUR INTEREST.

5. ACCORDINLY, IN OUR VIEW, THE DC SHOULD BE URGED TO REMAIN FIRM IN ITS PRESENT TACTIC, I.E. TO GIVE AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE TO THE COMMUNISTS IN TERMS OF 'PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD OR CONVERGENCE' WHILE FIRMLY REJECTING PCI PARTICIPATION IN THE MAJORITY OR IN ANY GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY. IN TALKING

TO ITALIAN LEADERS ABOUT THIS SUBJECT, IT SHOULD BE
RECOGNIZED THAT THE ACTION IS CURRENTLY IN MORO'S
AND NOT ANDREOTTI'S HANDS AND FURTHER THAT, IN THE
PRESENT ATMOSPHERE, THE PARTY IS NOT LIKELY TO MEEKLY
FOLLOW ANY SOLUTION THAT ANDREOTTI, MORO OR OTHER
PARTY LEADERS MIGHT WORK OUT. RELATIONS WITH THE PCI
IS A SUBJECT OF ACTIVE AND CONTINUING CONCERN THROUGH-
OUT THE DC PARTY. FINALLY, IT SHOULD BE BORNE IN
MIND THAT FORLANI IS A POTANTIAL COMPETITOR OF
ANDREOTTI FOR THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP SHOULD THERE BE
ANY CHANGE IN THE GOVERNMENT.GARDNER

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